

And we han had an il fit at this day;
And syn I sal have neen amendement
Agayn my los, I wil have esement.
By Goddes sale! it sal neen other bee.

THIS John answerde, Alayn, avyse thee;
The millere is a perilous man, he seyde,
And gif that he out of his sleepe abreyde,
He mighte doon us bathe a vile nyte.

Alayn answerde, I count hym nat a flye.
And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
This wenche lay uprighte, and faste slepte
Til he so ny was, er she myghte espie,
That it had been to late for to crie;

And, shortly for to seyn, they were at on.
Now pley, Alayn, for I wol speke of John.
This John lith stille a furlong/wey or two,
And to hymself he maketh routhe and wo;

Allas! quod he, this is a wikked jape;
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape;
Yet has my felawe somwhat for his harm,
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.

He aunted hym, and has his nedes sped,
And I lye as a draf/sek in my bed;
And when this jape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay.

I wil arise and aunte it, by my fayth;
Unhardy is unseely, thus men sayth.
And up he roos, and softly he wente
Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hente,

And baar it softe unto his beddes feet.
SOONE after this the wyf hir rowtyng leet,
And gan awake, and wente hire out to pisse,
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel mysse,

And groped heer and ther, but she foond noon.
Allas! quod she, I hadde almoost myssoon;
I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bed.
Ey, benedicite! thanne hadde I foule ysped.

And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And foond the bed and thoghte noght but good,
Bycause that the cradel by it stood,

And nyste wher she was, for it was derk,
But faire and wel she creepe in to the clerk;
And lith ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleepe.
Withinne a while this John the clerk up leepe,

And on this goode wyf he leith on soore;
So myrie a fit ne hadde she nat ful yoore;
He prieth harde and depe as he were mad.
This joly tyf han thise two clerkes lad

Til that the thridde cok bigan to synge.
ALAYN wax wery in the dawninge,
For he had swonken at the longe nyght;
And seyde, fare weel, Malyne, sweete wight!

The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But everemo, wherso I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!
Now, decre lemman, quod she, go, fareweel!

But, er thou go, o thyng I wol thee telle;
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihynde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busschel fynde,

That was ymaked of thyn owene mele,
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele;

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And, goode lemman, God thee save and kepe!
And with that word almoost she gan to wepe.
Alayn uprist and thoughte, Er that it dawed,
I wol go copen in by my felawe;

And fond the cradel with his hand anon.
By God! thoughte he, al wrang I have myssoon;
Myn heed is toty of my swynk tonyght,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.

I woot wel by the cradel I have myssoon;
Heere lith the millere and his wyf also.
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
Unto the bed theeras the millere lay.

He wende have copen by his felawe John,
And by the millere in he creepe anon,
And caughte hym by the nekke, & softe he spak
He seyde, Thou John, thou swynsheed, awak,

for Cristes saule, and heer a noble game;
for by that lord that called is seint Jame,
As I have thries in this shorte nyght
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt upright,

Whil thow hast as a coward been agast.
SE, false harlot, quod the millere, hast?
Al false traitour! false clerk! quod he,
Thow shalt be deed, by Goddes dignitee!

Who dorste be so boold to disparage
My doghter, that is come of swich lynage?
And by the throte/bolle he caughte Alayn;
And he hente hym despitously agayn,

And on the nose he smoot hym with his fest.
Down ran the bloody stream upon his brest,
And in the floor, with nose and mouth tobroke,
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke;

And up they goon, and down agayn anon,
Til that the millere sporned at a stoon,
And down he fil bakward upon his wyf,
That wiste nothyng of this nyce stryf;

for she was falle aslepe a lite wight
With John the clerk, that waked hadde al nyght;
And with the fal, out of hir sleepe she breyde.
Help, hooly croys of Bromeholm, she seyde,

In manus tuas! Lord, to thee I calle!
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle!
Myn herte is broken! help! I nam but deed!
Ther lyth oon on my wombe and on myn heed.

Helpe, Symkyn, for the false clerkes fighte!
THIS John stirte up, as soon as ever he
myghte,
And graspeth by the walles to and fro

To fynde a staf; and she stirte up also,
And knewe the estres bet than dide this John,
And by the wala staf she foond anon,
And saugh a litel shymeryng of a light,

for at an hole in shoon the moone bright;
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
But sikerly she nyste who was who,
But as she saugh a whit thyng in hir eye:

And whan she gan the white thyng espye,
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer,
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
And wende han hit this Alayn at the fulle;

And smoot the millere on the pyled skulle,
And down he gooth, and cride, harrow! I dye!
Thise clerkes beete hym weel and lete hym lye.

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And greythen hem and tooke hir hors anon,
And eek hire mele, and on hir wey they gon,
And at the mille yet they tooke hir cake
Of half a busschel flour ful wel ybake.

THIS is the proude millere wel ybete,
And hath ylost the gryndyng of the whete,
And payed for the soper everideel
Of Alayn and of John, that bette hym weel;

his wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
Lo! swich it is a millere to be fals.
And therfore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,
Hym thar nat wene wel that yvele dooth;

A gylour shal hymself bigyle be,
And God, that sitteth heighe in Trinitee,
Save al this compaignye, grete and smale!
Thus have I quy the Millere in my tale.

Here is ended the Reves Tale.

The prologe of the Cookes Tale.

THE Cook of London, whil the Reve
spak,
For joye him thoughte he clawed
him on the bak;

Ha, ha! quod he, for Cristes pas-
sion,
This millere hadde a sharpe conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbergage;

Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,
Ne brynge nat every man into thyn hous;
for herberwyng by nyghte is perilous.
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be

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HEERE BIGYNNETH THE COOKES TALE

PRENTYS whilom dwel-
led in oure citee,
And of a craft of vitailliers
was hee.

Gaillard he was as gold-
fynch in the shawe;
Broun as a berye, a propre
short felawe,

With lokkes blake ykempd
ful fetisly;
Dauncen he koude so wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkyn Revelour.

He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony sweete.
Wel was the wenche that with hym myght meete;
At every bridale wolde he synge and hoppe,

He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For whan ther any ridyng was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe;
Til that he hadde al the sighte yseyn

And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn;
And gadered hym a meynne of his sort
To hoppe and synge and maken swich disport;
And ther they setten stevene for to meete

To pleyen at the dys in swich a streete;
for in the toun nas ther no prentys
That fairer koude cast a paire of dys
Than Perkyn koude, and therto he was free

Of his dispense, in place of pryvetee.

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Whom that he broghte into his pryvetee.
I pray to God, so yeve me sorwe and care,
If evere sithe I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herde I a millere bettre yset awerk;

He hadde a jape of malice in the derk.
But God forbode that we stynten heere,
And therfore if ye vouchesauf to heere
A tale of me, that am a povre man,

I wol yow telle as wel as evere I kan
A litel jape that fil in oure citee.

Oure Hoost answerde & seide, I graunte it thee;
Now telle on, Roger, looke that it be good;
for many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a jakke of Dovere hastow soold,

That hath been twies hoot and twies coold.
Of many a pilgrym hastow Cristes curs,
for of thy percelly yet they fare the wors
That they han eten with thy stubbel goos,

for in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name,
But yet I pray thee be nat wroth for game,
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.

Thou seist ful sooth, quod Roger, by my fey!
But sooth pley, quaad pley, as the flemysng seith;
And therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,

Though that my tale be of an hostileer:
But natheless I wol nat telle it yit;
But er we parte, ywis, thou shalt be quit;
And therwithal he lough and made cheere,

And seyde his tale as ye shul after heere.

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That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;
for often tyme he foond his box ful bare.
for sikerly a prentys revelour,
That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,

His maister shal it in his shoppe abyde,
Al have he no part of the mynstralcy;
for thefte and riot they been convertible,
Al konne he pleye on gyterne or ribible.

Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degree,
They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.

THIS joly prentys with his maister bood,
Til he were ny out of his prentishood;
Al were he snybbed bothe erly and late,
And somtyme lad with revel to Newegate;

But atte laste his maister hym bithoghte,
Upon a day whan he his papir soghte,
Of a proverbe that seith this same word,
Wel bet is roten appul out of hoord

Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
It is wel lasse harm to lete hym pace
Than he shende alle the servaunts in the place.

Therfore his maister yaf hym acquitance,
And bad hym go with sorwe and with meschance;
And thus this joly prentys hadde his leve.
Now lat him riote al the nyghte or leve.

And for ther is no theef withoute a lowke,
That helpeth hym to wasten and to sowke
Of that he brybe kan or borwe may,

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